

ADDRESS
TO
**THE LOTOS CLUB OF
NEW YORK**

BY
HOWARD ELLIOTT,
Chief Executive
of
THE NEW YORK NEW HAVEN AND HARTFORD
and
NEW ENGLAND
TRANSPORTATION LINES.

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LOTOS CLUB,
NEW YORK CITY
December 13, 1913

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MR. PRESIDENT LAWRENCE AND MEMBERS OF THE LOTOS CLUB:

Gathering around the dinner table and talking over the questions of the day is not a phase of modern life. It is as old as civilization. Much good often comes from these dinners, although they impose, perhaps, a burden upon the speakers and often a greater burden upon the listeners.

Early Recollections I have much sympathy with the tenets and high purposes of the Lotos Club, and of its intellectual atmosphere. I was born in New York City and my father before and after the war was intimately associated with the literary circles of the city, a writer of some books and a contributor to many magazines. I can remember very well the kindly face of Horace Greeley, who came to our house when I was a little boy. I remember meeting George William Curtis, and, in later days, at Cambridge, I knew James Russell Lowell and William Dean Howells, all of whom are held in grateful remembrance by this club. Then, too, in my early days, I heard reminiscences in my family of the Brook Farm of Dana and Ripley and the high-minded souls of that experimental community, and about Thoreau, Hawthorne, and Emerson.

Lotos Guests It is difficult for me to express fittingly my appreciation of the compliment you pay in asking me to be your guest. This club has had for its guests Presidents of the United States, princes, distinguished ambassadors and cabinet officers of our own and other countries, renowned literary men and painters, great travelers, scholars and publicists, and its influence for good cannot be estimated.

Our New Citizens It has been in my mind for some time to say a word about the responsibility of the American citizen. There is today a burden upon the educated and intelligent man to lift up his voice in favor of the preservation of our institutions. It is a time for candor. We all recall that in Eng-

land one hundred years ago the idea prevailed that when there were 100,000,000 people in this country, then would begin the disintegration of the republic, on the theory that the original Anglo-Saxon could not be assimilated with the blood of immigrants coming from other nations. We have reached the 100,000,000 mark, and the census of 1910 states that the population of forty-two cities having more than one hundred thousand population is 18,751,405, or twenty per cent. of the population of the United States; and that two out of every three of the inhabitants of these cities are descendants of foreign-born parents. Since the dawn of the twentieth century more than 10,500,000 immigrants have landed in the United States, and four out of every five immigrants had no trade. These immigrants have swelled the ranks of the workers in industrial centers; in the slums of Baltimore, Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York the foreign-born and their descendants form the following percentages of population: 77, 90, 91, and 95 respectively; and of every 100 aliens in these same cities, 40, 47, 51, and 59 in these respective cities are illiterate. It is estimated that more than 7,000,000 people of Slav, Latin, and Asiatic blood dwell in crowded industrial centers. They come from lands where democracy is unknown and the universal franchise unheard of and government is autocratic, arbitrary, often unjust and inhuman. Do these new citizens understand their responsibility to a government "of the people, for the people, and by the people"?

Lord
Macauley

You will remember that Lord Macauley stated that the test of the government of the United States would come when our national domain was pretty well occupied.

This able English statesman and essayist, on May 23, 1857, wrote as follows, about the United States:

His
Prophecy

"I have long been convinced that institutions purely democratic must, sooner or later, destroy liberty or civilization, or both. In Europe, where the population is dense, the effect of such institutions would be almost in-

stantaneous. What happened lately in France is an example. In 1848 a pure democracy was established there. During a short time there was reason to expect a general spoliation, a national bankruptcy, a new partition of the soil, a maximum of prices, a ruinous load of taxation laid on the rich for the purpose of supporting the poor in idleness. Such system would, in 20 years, have made France as poor and barbarous as the France of the Carlovingsians. Happily, the danger was averted; and now there is a despotism, a silent tribune, an enslaved press. Liberty is gone, but civilization has been saved. I have not the smallest doubt that if we had a purely democratic government here the effect would be the same. Either the poor would plunder the rich, and civilization would perish; or order and prosperity would be saved by a strong military government, and liberty would perish. You may think that your country enjoys an exemption from these evils. I will frankly own to you that I am of a very different opinion. Your fate I believe to be certain, though it is deferred by a physical cause. As long as you have a boundless extent of fertile and unoccupied land, your laboring population will be far more at ease than the laboring population of the Old World, and, while that is the case, the Jefferson politics may continue to exist without causing any fatal calamity. But the time will come when New England will be as thickly peopled as Old England. Wages will be as low, and will fluctuate as much with you as with us. You will have your Manchesters and Birminghams, and in those Manchesters and Birminghams hundreds of thousands of artisans will assuredly be sometimes out of work. Then your institutions will be fairly brought to the test. Distress everywhere makes the laborer mutinous and discontented, and inclines him to listen with eagerness to agitators who tell him that it is monstrous iniquity that one man should have a million while another cannot get a full meal. * * * It is quite plain that your Government will never be able to restrain a distressed and discontented majority. For with you the majority is the government and has the rich, who are always a minority, absolutely at its mercy. The day will come when in the State of New

York a multitude of people, none of whom has had more than half a breakfast, or expects to have more than half a dinner, will choose a legislature. Is it possible to doubt what sort of a legislature will be chosen? On one side is a statesman preaching patience, respect for vested rights, strict observance of public faith. On the other is a demagogue ranting about the tyranny of capitalists and usurers, and asking why anybody should be permitted to drink champagne and to ride in a carriage, while thousands of honest folks are in want of necessities. Which of the two candidates is likely to be preferred by a workingman who hears his children cry for more bread? I seriously apprehend that you will, in such a season of adversity as I have described, do things which will prevent prosperity from returning; that you will act like a people who should in a year of scarcity devour all the seed corn, and thus make the next a year not of scarcity, but of absolute famine. There will be, I fear, spoliation. The spoliation will increase the distress. The distress will produce fresh spoliation. There is nothing to stop you. Your Constitution is all sail and no anchor. As I said before, when a society has entered on its downward progress, either civilization or liberty must perish. Either some Caesar or Napoleon will seize the reins of government with a strong hand, or your Republic will be as fearfully plundered and laid waste by barbarians in the twentieth century as the Roman Empire was in the fifth; with this difference, that the Huns and Vandals who ravaged the Roman Empire came from without, and that your Huns and Vandals will have been engendered within your own country and by your own institutions."

Good
Sense to
Prevail

I do not agree with all that Lord Macauley says because I believe the good sense of all the American people will solve their problems, but it is well to heed what he says and exercise good sense vigorously and continuously so as to prevent the conditions described by him.

James Bryce, formerly British Ambassador at Washington, in his work, "The American Commonwealth", states:

**What
Bryce
Says**

“The coming of these humble suppliants for entrance into the land of a people rich and strong cannot but affect that people.

What changes in the character and habits of the American people will this influx of new elements make, elements wholly diverse, not only in origin, but in ideas and traditions, and scarcely less diverse from the Irish and Teutonic immigrants of previous years than from the men of predominantly English stock, who inhabited the country before the Irish or continental Teutons arrived? This is the crucial question in which every study of the immigrant problem leads up to. It is a matter of grave import for the world, seeing that it is virtually a new phenomenon in world history, because no large movement of the races of mankind from one region of the earth to another has ever occurred under conditions at all resembling these. But it is primarily momentous for the United States, and that all the more so because these new immigrants go to swell the class which already causes some disquietude, the class of unskilled laborers, the poorest, the most ignorant, and the most unsettled part of the population. That there is ground for anxiety in the presence of this vast and growing multitude of men ignorant and liable to be misled cannot be denied. Let it not be forgotten that a low standard of living is an economic disease.”

Prof. Frank Julian Warne, Secretary of the New York State Immigration Commission, and Special Expert on the Foreign Born Population, United States Census of 1910, in his book entitled “The Immigrant Invasion,” says:

**Prof. Warne’s
Views**

“Never before in the history of this people, with the possible exception of the Revolutionary and Civil War periods, have the underpaid and ignorant laborers of the Old

World been called upon by the inexorable logic of economic forces to decide so momentous a question as the election of a President of the United States and all others in authority.”

Prof. Warne believes that the only course is to restrict immigration and take an inventory of those already here and who must be raised to a higher standard of living and trained for their duty as citizens.

William Williams, former United States Commissioner of Immigration at New York, in his work, "The New Immigration—Some Unfavorable Features and Possible Remedies," remarks:

Mr. Williams' Prediction "The most important effects of immigration today are the racial effects. They constitute a question not between the citizens and immigrants of today, but between the citizens' children and grandchildren. We owe our present civilization and standing amongst nations chiefly to people of a type widely different from that of those now coming here in such numbers. The probable effect on the future of this country of the millions of further immigrants representing the bad elements of Russia, Austria and Southern Italy, who are sure to come here during the next few years, if permitted to do so, should be made the subject of exhaustive scientific research, which might or might not show that to maintain our institutions and standards of civilization substantially as they are it will be necessary to limit this new immigration in some manner far more radical than any hereinbefore suggested."

Dr. Prescott F. Hall, Secretary of the Immigration Restriction League, in his work, "Immigration and Its Effects Upon the United States," says:

Dr. Hall on the Foreign Vote "The enormous political power which can be exercised by the foreign-born is shown by the fact that of the males of voting age over one-quarter are foreign born, and that nearly three-fifths of these have been naturalized. Indeed, the foreign vote of two generations hence is larger than the native vote of native parentage. One grave danger lies in the liberality with which the ballot is given foreigners."

I have given these quotations to emphasize the responsibility of the educated citizen. Personally, I am opposed to a too rigid restriction of immigration because the country needs strong men and women to cut down the forests, to reforest the land, to dig the coal, to build good roads, and to do the many kinds of work needed under modern conditions of life. Particularly does the country need those who are willing to clear the land and to till the soil and do the work on the farm, the ranch, and the orchard, which is so vitally necessary if this country is to improve and cheapen its food supply. Is it not wiser to permit these strangers to come to us and then teach them the duties and responsibilities they owe to the country that gives them the great opportunities that this country furnishes rather than to turn them away? Most of these new citizens are not students. Seldom do many of them read even newspapers. As Stevenson would say, "Life is their volume." When they first come hard work and discomfort is often their lot, but there are countless examples of success far greater than they could have achieved in their foreign homes. A large proportion are receptive and subject to the influences that surround them. They may become a menace, but they can be made a boon to the country if their good qualities are developed and the bad ones eliminated. It is for the Lotos Club and bodies of similar cultivation and force to say which. We ought not to neglect the newcomers to our shores. Threats of the terrors of the law will not do all that is needed. By individual appeal and personal responsibility must these new peoples in our land be taught the power for good of this great nation.

Consider the great growth of the population and the change of the character of it since 1870; the marvelous growth in material wealth, and remember that much of the brains and energy of the country have been very busily engaged since the Civil War in the wonderful material development of the country and that possibly not enough attention has been paid to some of the fundamentals of national life. Our prosperity has increased the complications of government, and the close attention given by our people to business has diverted the personal attention of

many from public affairs, and there is not the feeling of interest and responsibility about them that characterized the American people when there were fewer people and less wealth.

Vast Increase in Wealth In the year 1870 the estimated wealth of this country was \$24,054,814,806. In 1900 it had increased to \$88,517,306,775, and in 1904, the last year for which it has been computed, to \$107,104,192,410. Between 1890 and 1900 the increase was \$23,480,215,588, or 36 per cent., while in the four years from 1900 to 1904 the increase was \$18,586,885,635, or about 21 per cent. In 1870 the wealth per capita was \$624; in 1904 it was \$1,318. Goldsmith says:

“Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
where wealth accumulates and men decay.”

Wealth has accumulated in a phenomenal manner in this country, but we cannot, and must not, permit a decadence of our citizens.

Failure to Vote Has not the time arrived when, by individual effort, we must see to it that the so-called professional politicians do not control our foreign-born citizens or their immediate descendants? Are those of us who are fortunate enough to have received a good education, to have a little more than actual bread and butter, to have some traditions about the United States doing all that we should, as citizens, to help? In Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware about thirty per cent. of those entitled to vote did not take advantage of the franchise. In the country at large about thirty-five per cent. failed to take their share of the responsibility of selecting a ruler. In a number of Northwestern states and cities for which I have the figures, in 1910, when there was not the interest of a Presidential election, from 45.9% to 59.1% of those having the right to vote did not do so. These figures show that

from 21% to 33% of those entitled to vote decide who shall hold office and make and administer the laws under which all must work and live. This relatively small proportion of voters who make the majority in an election enables the boss to work his will and create conditions which we all may deplore but which we submit to passively.

Force of Public Opinion In the long run, all great questions affecting the national welfare are settled by the force of public opinion, but is that force properly and fairly reflected when so large a proportion of those holding the franchise fail to exercise it? As educated men are we doing our full duty and encouraging others to do theirs in making intelligent use of the great privilege of selecting and voting for those that are to rule us?

A group of men discussed several evenings ago the talk about old political nostrums. Some believed that the initiative, referendum and the recall of officials and of judicial decisions had been revived in recent years by some political leaders in the hope of remedying or readjusting political conditions. Others in the group believed these doctrines had been revived for personal ends.

Neglect of the Primaries It was the opinion of several in the group that much of the dissatisfaction with political conditions had come from voters who had neglected their opportunities to straighten out affairs themselves. They referred to the fact, or what they believed to be a fact, that this is a delegated government—not a representative government nor a democratic government, but a delegated government and nothing more. They told how merchants, professional men and many others engaged in the activities of life failed year in and year out to attend the primaries of their parties. They insisted that the primary is the unit of government.

One in the gathering was a merchant who likes to take a hand in politics; another was a lawyer, another was an importer, and they admitted that they seldom, if ever, attended the primaries of their parties, and in remaining

away had left the control of those primaries in the hands of professional politicians, and thus these professional politicians had, through the voters' own negligence, been delegated to represent them in making nominations for local, state, and eventually national offices, as well as in the preparation and adoption of state and national platforms.

Proposed One of the lawyers in the gathering insisted
New that there was only one remedy which
Amendment would compel the business, professional
 and working men of the country to destroy
this alleged delegated system of government. He declared
that this remedy consisted entirely and only in an amend-
ment to the Constitution of the United States which would
disfranchise a voter who did not attend the primaries. He
thereupon drew up the following proposed amendment to
Article XV of the Constitution of the United States:

“RESOLVED, By the Senate and House of Represent-
atives of the United States of America, in Congress
assembled, two-thirds of both houses concurring, that
the following article be proposed to the Legislatures of
the several States as an amendment to the Constitution
of the United States, which article, when ratified by
three-fourths of the said Legislatures, shall be valid to
all intents and purposes, as part of the said Constitu-
tion, namely:

ARTICLE XV.

“SECTION 3.—Every male citizen of the United
States, of the age of 21 years, shall have the right to
vote at any State or general election, providing he
shall have first voted at the primary in his district next
preceding such election.”

This lawyer believed if such an amendment could be
introduced and passed in Congress at Washington this
Winter it would forever do away with the system of dele-
gated government.

**We
Must
Vote**

I am not enough of a student of public affairs to have any opinion as to the wisdom of such an amendment and I have no cure for the difficulty. I only want to point out that it seems to me unfortunate that a more intelligent use of the franchise is not made, and that the educated man does not work harder to help his less fortunate brother to come to right conclusions. This failure to use the franchise, the neglect of the educated man to do his full duty as a citizen and to take some time away from his business for his civic duties, have a relation to some of the economic difficulties now confronting the country, and creating a period of uncertainty and unrest.

Let me refer for a moment to a recent speech by a member of this club, Samuel Untermeyer. His declaration that a halt should be called upon further governmental investigations of past doings of corporations is an expression of a growing sentiment among intelligent citizens, and reflects the feeling that greater care should be used in making and administering the laws.

**Don't
Always
Punish**

It has been said, "Criminologists hold that imprisoning a man for a crime punishes him but does not augment his value as a member of society." Perhaps Mr. Untermeyer had that thought in mind when he made his address to the Economic Club of Springfield several evenings ago. I do not agree with all that Mr. Untermeyer said, but the present day situation about certain kinds of business, railroad and otherwise, is illustrated by an incident that occurred in the West some twenty years ago.

Bill Yokim was an excellent fellow who kept a livery stable and set up to be a great horse expert. One day, Bill had a colt coming in which he was going to break, and a number of friends were invited to witness the performance. The spectators sat on the fence while Bill trained the colt. It took him about an hour and a half, and when he got through the colt was dead.

**Bill Yokim's
Remedy** Bill Yokim's experience, I fear, may be repeated if we remain passive and permit our politicians, perhaps I should say, rulers, to keep on regulating or training the railroad and other forms of public service corporations; they will be well trained, but they will be dead. Some day, possibly not before the millenium, the people will reach the conclusion that there are only two ways of treating railroad business. One is to treat it as a function of government, and the other is to treat it as commerce, or business subject to reasonable regulation. There is no middle ground. It is impossible, in the long run, to persuade private capital to invest in railroads if politicians and governmental bureaucrats are to exercise all the functions of ownership and management. It may be in the power of the government to destroy a part or the whole of the private capital which has heretofore been invested in the railroads, on the theory that the investor was to have some voice in managing his business, but it is not in the power of the government to make individuals repeat any such foolish experiment, and they will not do it.

**Dislocation
Should
Cease** While, as I say, I do not accept all of Mr. Untermeyer's suggestions in his Springfield address, I do believe most earnestly that the period of dislocation should cease and all hands be given an opportunity for constructive work which will help the welfare of the people, of security holders, and the development of the nation.

Is it for the best interest of all to punish the railroads and other corporations for misdeeds that were not considered wrong in the light of the law as then understood, or of public opinion at the time the deeds were done? Is it necessary for a continued flood of legislation against the railroads and against all corporations?

Flood of Legislation

It may be said that in the matter of legislation the railroads suffer in common with all other enterprises and with every individual in the country from the American passion for legislation and their belief that a new law will cure any and all troubles incident to human life. How profound that passion is can be gathered from a comparison of the bills introduced into and passed by the English Parliament and by our national Senate and House. At Westminster, during the ten years ending with 1909, there were introduced and considered 6,251 measures, of which 3,882 became law; at Washington, during the same period, there were considered 146,471 different bills, of which no less than 16,000 became law. In forty-two State Legislatures, in session since January of the present year, there were introduced 1,395 bills affecting the operation of railroads. This is almost five times as many as were introduced in the legislatures of 1912, and three times as many as those introduced in the year 1911. In 1912, only nineteen State Legislatures met, which partly accounts for the lessened activity of the legislatures that year. But, as an indication of how rapidly the tide of railway legislation is rising, in 1911 there were fourteen bills introduced per legislative session; in 1912, fifteen, while in the present year there have been thirty-three such measures per legislative session. Of the 1,395 bills introduced in the present year affecting railroad operation, 230 have become law. This is practically the same proportion as in the previous year when forty-eight out of 292 bills were enacted. The bills introduced covered almost every conceivable subject—for instance: 107 full crew bills were introduced, of which 14 passed; other bills took up hospital and relief departments, burning of weeds, speed of dead freight trains, make-up of freight and passenger trains, signals, crossings and locomotive headlights, block signals and steel cars; while on the subject of railroad trespassing, for which the railroads have been asking for relief to reduce accident liability, out of 65 such bills introduced only six became laws.

**A
Lynching
Story**

You probably all remember the story attributed to early days in Arkansas, about the man who was lynched for stealing a horse. After the ceremony was over and the poor fellow was cut down, it was found that another man had stolen the horse. The lynchers were in trouble, but they mustered up their courage and took the body to the little cabin where the unfortunate widow lived. Pushing it through the door, the spokesman said: "Here's your husband, marm. We thought he stole a horse and we hung him. It's our mistake and the laugh's on us." In the very earnest desire that every right thinking man has for improving living and business conditions, reform and corrective movements should be undertaken with great care and moderation so that the country will not wake up some day and find that they have lynched some important form of business and it is "their mistake," but the laugh will not be on any one in that case!

**Responsibility
of the
Press**

The press, authors, scholars, and publicists have much responsibility to the public for what they present to that public. As one of your distinguished members, Chester S. Lord, has pointed out in his lecture as a Regent of the University of the State, before the Columbia School of Journalism, "Everybody of any account reads the newspapers, and I am sorry to say that the great mass of the community read little else. I judge this to be true largely by comparison with other publications. Take the magazine, for instance, which for numbers of readers ranks next to the newspapers. About 4,000,000 magazines are printed in this city each month for circulation all over the United States and the world, of which approximately one-eighth, or 500,000, are sold in this community. A million and a half newspapers are printed in New York every morning; another million and a half are printed every afternoon. We have then 500,000 magazines sold here every month against 3,000,000 newspapers sold every day, or 90,000,000 newspapers sold every month." Some figures obtained a few years ago showed that the printing of newspapers and

periodicals in this country has grown from 11,314 publications in 1880, issuing 2,067,848,209 copies a year, to 22,603 a year or so ago, issuing 10,600,000,000 copies a year. Each one of these publications has some effect, good or bad, on someone, and particularly on the newcomer, who knows little about our institutions. The schools of the country are teaching daily about 20,000,000 boys and girls, and every individual interested in the welfare of his country should exercise some influence in seeing that common sense, industry, self-denial, and patriotism are taught as well as some other things, many of which are useless to the child in his or her future.

**Faith
in the
Future**

This influx of those who do not understand the United States, the multitude of laws, the half teaching of many young people of some of the great fundamental principles of living, the head lines in the press, the neglect by many to do their duty as citizens have tended to produce some of the conditions feared by Lord Macauley, but I have great faith in the future. My business has been such that I have traveled many times in the last twenty years between the Atlantic, the Mississippi Valley, the Rocky Mountains, and Puget Sound. To make those trips and to see the farms, the small towns with neat and prosperous little houses, and the growing cities, restores one's confidence when the attacks on and criticisms of some of our affairs by both politicians and the press seem to imply that the country is going to the dogs. The country is not going to smash; it is going to keep on going forward. Business methods are improving every year—there is a higher standard today among those engaged in administering the great business concerns and public service corporations than there was ten years ago. As a class, the men in that work are as honest, high-minded, earnest, and patriotic as those in any other line of activity in the United States, not excepting governmental service.

**Higher
Business
Standards**

This class of men has done much in the last twenty-five years to create the conditions that enable the United States to hold the proud position that she does. They now owe it to themselves and to the country to devote some of their time, ability and energy to explaining and defending themselves and in telling the people the truth about their business. In the long run, the people of the United States are not unjust, but they must know the real truth or in striving to bring about reforms they may act as to upset and injure business conditions in such a way as to defeat the very results they wish. We all remember how nearly the silver question plunged the country into real distress. The same unthinking course towards business may produce a like result. It is very difficult, in this large and complicated land of ours, to have the same things considered in the same way and at the same time by all the people. Hence the importance of having the educated citizen use his influence to present the facts correctly at all times.

**Individual
Responsibility**

Complaint was made at one time that business was too much engaged in politics, and perhaps it was, but now it can be said justly that politics is engaged entirely too much in business, and that such policy tends to take away the self-reliance and initiative of the American man who has done such a good work in making this United States what it is. So I repeat again that if we are to avoid some of those difficulties that Lord Macauley and the others referred to speak of, we must, each one of us as American citizens, do a little more of the work of a citizen and not leave the work of deciding what our government is to be to those who are ignorant, unthinking, and sometimes actually dishonest.

Two dinners will always remain cherished memories with me. One was given to me by officers and men of the Northern Pacific when I retired from the Presidency of that great property and came here to help solve this compli-

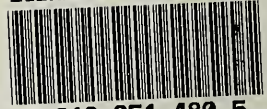
cated New England situation. There were 240 men at the dinner, from junior clerks receiving \$50.00 a month to General Managers, Counsels, and Vice-Presidents, receiving \$10,000, \$15,000, and \$20,000 a year. There were men from all classes in the service and 18 states and 35 cities were represented. That dinner represented the size and ramifications of the great transportation agencies of the country, and the meeting was a tribute of which any man should be proud.

Two Dinners

The other dinner of which I am equally proud is this one, and most heartily do I thank you again for it. This dinner represents a different set of men and different activities, but those in this room have more diverse powers for helpful influence in shaping the affairs of the country than the men at the other dinner. The men at both dinners have an opportunity, each one in the niche fate has allotted to him, and a duty to use his influence just a little more than he does to help train the many new citizens to realize their duties and responsibilities as well as to care for himself and his family. There is a favorite quotation of mine that I think has an inspiration for every patriotic American, and should be taken to heart by him at this time, when great, silent changes seem to be taking place in the character of our people and of our methods of government:

“Say not the days are evil—Who’s to blame?
And fold the hands and acquiesce—O shame!
Stand up, speak out and bravely in God’s name.”

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